

City of Lafayette Staff Report

For: City Council
By: Tony Coe, Engineering Services Manager
Date Written: January 4, 2008
Meeting Date: January 14, 2008
Subject: Library Construction Impacts on Golden Gate Way On-Street Parking

Introduction

In November 2007 the City Council received a letter from Mr. Robert Gray of Lafayette Motors (3470 Golden Gate Way), asserting that parking by workers associated with the library construction has negatively impacted on-street parking in the area. The City Council requested a staff report on this matter. Staff is filing this report after having made daily observations of on-street parking conditions during multiple time periods during the month of December 2007. Staff has found no evidence that workers from the project park on Golden Gate Way, and with few exceptions on-street parking, while limited, are available to patrons of area businesses during most hours of the day.

Background

While Mr. Gray's letter echoes a number of other verbal complaints staff has received since the commencement of construction at the library site, dissatisfaction about on-street parking on Golden Gate Way can be documented to go back at least a decade to 1998. Long before the library project, merchants and property owners on GGW have complained that there is insufficient and inappropriate use of on-street parking. There have been allegations of area employees inappropriately parking for extended periods of time, area businesses using on-street spaces for vehicle storage, and certain people monopolizing public parking as private spaces. In 1998 the City implemented 2-hour parking restrictions on the south side of the street to ensure some orderly turn-over in parked vehicles in spite of some vociferous opposition from area stakeholders. In 2001 the Circulation Commission considered the installation of parking meters as an additional step to ensure the appropriate use of the limited on-street parking supply, but the proposal was rejected during public review. At that time, a parking space utilization study documented that Golden Gate Way had a nearly full occupancy rate with low turnover. Most recently in 2005, the Commission considered another request from a local business manager to establish parking time limits on Second Street due to her concern that other businesses were using the location for long-term parking. Staff's analysis again found high occupancy and low turnover of parking on the streets surrounding the library site, attributable to a lack of posted parking time zones and evidence that people were using tactics to circumvent enforcement efforts, such as erasing tire markings. Staff at that time identified several off-street options for accommodating employee parking and vehicle storage. In response to some merchants' opposition to establishing additional on-street parking time limits, the Circulation Commission advised them that they need to actively pursue these off-street

parking options due to the impending changes that would come with the completion of the library and that the establishment of additional parking time limits would likely occur in the near future. Shortly thereafter an analysis conducted as part of the library project planning confirmed occupancy conditions previously documented . The record suggests that the controversies related to parking in this area on Golden Gate Way have been on-going for nearly a decade. The high visibility of the library construction project has merely made it an easy target for redirected historical discontent with pre-existing conditions.

Observations of Current Conditions

Responding to the Council's request, staff observed on-street parking conditions on Golden Gate Way for a three-week period starting December 3, 2007, and leading up to the Christmas holiday, then again during the work week starting January 2, 2008. Observations were made to determine whether workers at the construction site park on the street, how construction staging and deliveries affect traffic and parking, and to gauge the level of availability of parking. Conditions were observed during early morning hours when construction activities begin at the library site, mid morning when businesses generally open, lunch time, and mid afternoon when project construction stops for the day.

In general staff has not found rampant parking by construction workers on Golden Gate Way as alleged. While it is impossible to track where each and every worker parks, we can confidently say that most workers park along the project frontage on the north side of the street, within the construction site, in the unregulated spaces not fronting any businesses on Second Street, or in other adjacent areas not affecting Golden Gate Way. There have been vehicles making deliveries during the day or personnel attending project meetings who park on Golden Gate Way. Typically these occur no more than once or twice a week, are for short durations of no more than two hours, and conclude before the businesses take on any kind of volume. On very rare occasions when a subcontractor vehicle is parked in front of a business for an extended period of time, staff has informed the contractor to move the vehicle and/or requested a special visit from our parking enforcement officers to cite the vehicle.

Excluding the project frontage on the north side, there are about 25 on-street parking spaces on the south side and 8 spaces on the north side along Golden Gate Way between First Street and Second Street. Posted time restrictions range between 30 minutes and 2 hours on the south side of the street. No time restrictions are posted on the north side of the street. Staff has routinely observed at least three, occasionally up to nine, parking spaces being available even during the busy hours around lunch and mid afternoon. Ninety-percent occupancy during peak times is consistent with documented observations in past studies of the area. Outside of these hours, there is usually an ample number of spaces. There have been some occasions when all parking spaces are occupied, but we do observe that the parking turns over, and the "full" condition generally lasts around 30 minutes.

Construction activities do contribute to general traffic congestion on the street at certain times. When there is a major concrete pour at the site, concrete delivery trucks queue in the street. The nature of the work limits our options in staging these operations. We try to mitigate the impacts by using flagmen for traffic control, but people's ability to park is undoubtedly affected.

Further Actions

The project specifications stipulate that the contractor and his subcontractors are not allowed to park or store vehicles and equipment on the street beyond the project frontage, especially not in front of a business. This is a standard for all public projects in Lafayette, and is a higher standard than what has been applied to private development. For example, the City does not place parking restrictions on any private development in the downtown. Construction workers for projects such as the Lafayette Mercantile or Town Center may park in any legal on-street space, so long as the posted restrictions are observed.

To the best of our knowledge, the library contractor and his subcontractors have complied with the project specifications regarding parking. Staff continually reiterates our interest in this matter at weekly project meetings to ensure that this compliance is maintained. Since we have found no evidence of abuse, staff does not recommend taking further actions within the context of the library construction project beyond continuing our vigilance to enforce the contract specifications.

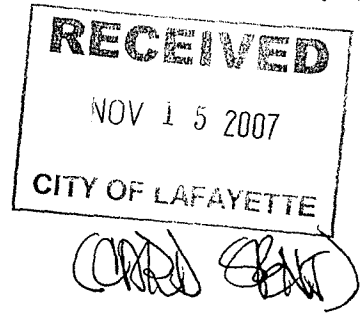
Recommendation

Receive and file.

AM- Please Respond. Jhx. SBI

First meeting
in January

LAFAYETTE MOTORS
3470 Golden Gate Way
Lafayette, California 94549
925-284-4852



Dear Mr. Falk,

This letter is related to the recent follow up letter sent to all Lafayette businesses with regards to commute alternatives and the limited parking within the city. With regards to the parking problem, the City of Lafayette has created a serious parking problem of its own. This new problem has arisen due to the construction of the new library.

While it is very difficult to plan every detail of such a project, a serious oversight has been made with regards to the already limited parking on Golden Gate Way being stressed well passed its ability to accommodate both the business and construction traffic. The result is a big mess. With the ever increasing level of contractor and construction crew vehicles being parked on Golden Gate Way, there is no room left for people attempting to do business on Golden Gate Way. The overflow has been pushed two blocks away and has made the surrounding streets dangerous for children on their way to school in the morning.

That being said, I do have some solutions to be considered:

1. Temporarily fence off an un-used section of the Albertson's parking lot and assign spaces accordingly.
2. Lease and assign spaces within the currently available, west end of the Haw's Auto Body/Plaza Auto building.
3. Lease space on Deer Hill Rd. and provide shuttle to job site.

I believe that there is a reasonable and timely solution to this burgeoning problem, and that the City of Lafayette will find it their duty to correct this oversight promptly.

Thank you,

Robert Gray

Cc: Carol Federighi, Mayor
Mike Anderson, Vice Mayor
Brandt Anderson, Council Member
Carl Anduri, Council Member
Don Tatzin, Council Member